

6 DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY



TOPICS IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

Economic Conditions and Trends

Key Existing Economic Sectors

Potential Growth Opportunities

This chapter focuses on Mansfield's economy and the role it plays in supporting the quality of life that is highly valued by residents, including the importance of sustaining and growing Mansfield's agricultural sector. A strong, diverse economy provides multiple benefits for residents, including jobs, access to goods and services, and financial support for community services such as education, public safety and recreation through a robust commercial tax base. Economic growth must also be balanced by sensitivity to preserving the unique character that is Mansfield, particularly in the more rural residential areas of the community.

This planning effort included the development of stand-alone strategy reports on economic development and agriculture. Much of the information and analysis in this chapter has been summarized from those documents; readers should refer directly to those reports for more detail.

what the **community** said

DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Throughout the planning process, community members focused on the need for balanced, managed economic growth that supports community goals and objectives without compromising the rural character enjoyed by the majority of town. While residents expressed concern with local tax burdens and recognized that growth in the commercial tax base could help compensate for declining state revenues and alleviate tax burdens on homeowners, there was clear concern expressed with the potential impacts of new growth on the community. Themes in the comments on growing the Mansfield economy included:

- Desire for a greater variety of retail establishments and more retail establishments targeting a non-student clientele
- Desire to retain existing agricultural businesses and encourage formation of new ones
- Need to retain and support existing and locally owned businesses
- Need to expand markets for locally produced agricultural goods
- Desire to increase the availability of locally grown food
- Need to improve Town policies and regulations to be more farm-friendly
- Preference for focusing retention and recruitment efforts on businesses with a strong commitment to the town
- Need to understand and address traffic impacts that might be associated with new development
- Desire for clustering new development and providing sidewalks linking residential areas to commercial clusters
- Concern with expanding the built footprint of the town (including the new UConn Technology Park) and associated impacts of new development on the town's character, including impacts of new water and sewer infrastructure to support growth
- Preference for redevelopment of existing sites instead of developing vacant properties
- Concerns with how much retail the town can support
- Questions as to whether redevelopment efforts would succeed without a redevelopment agency to help guide new development

“I would like to see the rural character of Mansfield maintained. At the same time to develop the infrastructure such that the economics of living in town are well balanced by growth of the tax income (i.e., by making it attractive for new businesses and tax paying enterprises to come to town.”

“[I’d like to see] smart growth... that expands tax base in an environmentally smart way, partners with the University, and encourages professionals and families to live here.”

“I envision a Mansfield where you don’t have to go out-of-town for amenities that modern 20-and-30-somethings take for granted.”

FROM MANSFIELD RESIDENTS

MANSFIELD'S ECONOMY TODAY



Photo credit: Don Couture

Storrs Center

From its roots as an agrarian economy in the 18th century to a town of mill villages centered around small-scale industries in the 19th century to the expansion of UConn as the state's flagship public university campus in the mid-twentieth century, Mansfield has continually adapted to changing economic conditions. The growth of UConn brought many benefits to the community, such as enhanced water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure and access to arts, culture, education and recreation amenities unparalleled in similarly-sized communities. The presence of UConn also had a significant influence on the Town's revenue stream. Inclusion of UConn students in the town's overall population resulted in higher educational cost sharing payments to the Town than would have otherwise been received. Combined with significant State PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) revenues, the Town was able to support a wide variety of community services and activities without actively engaging in economic development.

Conditions have changed in the 21st century, and Mansfield should take a fresh look at its economic underpinnings. State revenues have significantly declined over the last ten years, forcing the Town to find new sources of revenue to maintain its high level of services. UConn has become a linchpin in statewide economic development efforts with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities designed to catapult UConn into the top tier of public research institutions and attract new talent

and businesses to the state. As the town's population ages, the need to attract and retain younger professionals and families will be essential to Mansfield's continued economic diversity and viability.

The Town must take a more active role in economic development activities to maintain the high level of services expected by residents, of equal importance is the need to ensure that new business growth and development is balanced with other goals related to preservation of natural resources and rural character. In addition, growth of the agricultural sector has been identified as a key objective by the community, both to increase food security and community resiliency, and also because of the scenic and rural character of the community. Farm and forest lands also contribute to the Town's economy by providing "ecosystem services," such as clean water, and by requiring lower levels of Town services than residences.

Together, these aspirations and circumstances provide a foundation for shaping town economic development efforts in the years ahead.

GUIDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MANSFIELD

- Preserve Mansfield's rural and small-town character while providing a healthy economy that supports essential public services like schools.
- Emphasize "sustainable development" that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations, and that balances the pursuit of economic prosperity with environmental quality and social equity.
- Support businesses that are already established within the community.
- Focus new business development and expansion efforts on low-impact, high-value businesses such as research and development, professional and business services, and small-scale production of high-value products—businesses that generally have a small footprint and limited environmental impacts.
- Site new businesses and developments preferably on land that is already developed or zoned for commercial and industrial development.
- Support sustainable, productive agriculture and forestry, farmland preservation and farmland restoration. Tax revenues from these land uses exceed the cost of community services for the Town.
- Provide active leadership in the region's agricultural identity and successes.
- Establish flexibility in land use and business regulation that supports entrepreneurship and new business development consistent with the town's existing character.
- Sustain the community's cultural and natural assets through appropriately focused and scaled tourism activities.
- Expand retail and consumer services focused on meeting the needs of local residents and workers, or on drawing visitors with unique offerings that reinforce the town's identity.
- Develop, attract and retain a talented workforce to support innovation, job creation, and new business ventures that are key to the long-term success of the local economy.
- Collaborate regionally where working with adjacent communities through regional entities has the potential to achieve economic synergies and shared benefits.
- Protect the water resources that economic growth depends on.

The pages that follow provide more information on existing economic conditions, trends and opportunities for Mansfield as well as the variety of tools and resources available to help the town achieve its goals.

WHAT IS “ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?”

Most fundamentally, economic development is about maintaining and expanding businesses that export their products to consumers outside the community, thereby importing income and increasing local employment and wealth. These types of businesses are referred to as the “traded sector.” The income from the traded sector circulates within the community, creating demand for goods and services from businesses that primarily service local residents such as retail and consumer services; these types of economic activities are referred to as the “sheltered sector.” Sheltered sector businesses such as supermarkets and pharmacies, local attorneys, physicians and accountants, and automotive repair shops and hair salons, provide goods and services primarily to people who live and work in the community

While attracting income from outside the community is the foundation of economic development efforts, communities often have two other economic development goals:

- **Expansion of the sheltered sector.** While the sheltered sector typically relies on income from the traded sector for its development, local impediments to the growth of the sheltered sector such as a lack of suitable land and buildings or the absence of critical infrastructure must be addressed to ensure that the sheltered sector grows to its full potential. Addressing these impediments can increase employment and provide residents convenient access to a wider array of goods and services. Mansfield residents have expressed a desire for more retail and services.
- **Expansion of the tax base.** Commercial, industrial, agricultural and forest properties are typically net generators of tax revenue. Retention and expansion of these land uses provide revenue to reduce the residential property tax burden while maintaining quality public services which, in addition to enhancing quality of life, can be an important factor in attracting additional business activity.

TOOLS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL BOX

Communities can use a range of tools to achieve economic development goals. These tools are not applied in isolation, but are typically complementary and synergistic in supporting the overall economic development program, including agriculture.

- **Entrepreneurship and small business development.** Tools to help small businesses start up and grow include entrepreneurial training programs, one-on-one technical assistance, networking and col-

laboration venues, and various forms of public or quasi-public business financing.

- **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE).** Established businesses face a range of challenges as they seek to retain profitability and pursue expansion opportunities. Business retention and expansion programs typically involve one-to-one outreach, identification of key issues that threaten retention or impede growth, and follow-up to directly resolve these issues or broker needed assistance. Econom-

ic gardening, a variant of business retention and expansion programs, involves intensive market and competitive analysis to assist rapidly expanding firms to develop new products and markets.

- **Business recruitment.** This approach uses marketing and incentives to induce established businesses that may be expanding or building new facilities to locate in a community. Recruitment is typically a state or regional function, particularly in areas with small communities with limited economic development capacity and incentive funding, and is typically targeted to larger businesses.
- **Workforce development.** Businesses need appropriately trained and skilled workers to provide quality products and services at profitable levels. Education and training institutions need to understand the workforce needs of local employers and work with employers to ensure that their programs are responsive. Workforce development efforts typically take place at the regional level, particularly in rural areas, but local communities can collaborate with employers on career development at the K-12 level.
- **Talent attraction and retention.** As the ability to attract skilled professional and technical workers is critical to success of high-value, high-wage, growth businesses, the community environment is an important factor in decisions by these businesses about where to locate. Communities are consequently paying more attention to developing the amenities necessary to attract highly skilled workers who have choices of where to live and work.
- **Regulatory and tax policies.** Businesses newly locating in a community or moving into new space typically need to obtain certain regulatory approvals, particularly when there is a change in use or need to make a physical alteration to the property. The more these regulations and regulatory processes can be made user friendly without compromising community safety and environmental quality, the less they are an impediment to attracting and retaining desirable businesses. Communities can also offer various forms of tax incentives to promote desirable forms of business development
- **Real estate and infrastructure development.** As businesses start, expand or relocate in a community, they need appropriate land, space and infrastructure to meet their facility needs. If a community targets certain kinds of business activity as part of its economic development strategy, it must ensure that its land use regulations and infrastructure investments are aligned with those targets.
- **The local role in economic development.** How a community uses these economic development tools is a function of its own resources and capacities, as well as the mission, resources and capacities of other local or regional organizations that can be mobilized as partners. In general, the community wants to adopt the least costly and resource-intensive role necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Potential roles for the Town of Mansfield in implementing an economic development plan include:
 - > Information provider
 - > Broker (matching businesses with service providers)
 - > Catalyst (convening partners to develop a program or resource)
 - > Partner
 - > Investor
 - > Program developer and manager

1. Economic Conditions and Trends

For detailed information on current economic conditions, please refer to the July 2013 *Mansfield Tomorrow Economic Development and Agriculture Strategy Reports*.

A) MANSFIELD HAS THE ECONOMIC PROFILE OF A “COMPANY TOWN” AND ITS ECONOMY IS PERFORMING RELATIVELY WELL.

Leading Economic Sectors. As home to the state’s flagship university campus, the Mansfield economy relies heavily on state government. In 2011, state government accounted for 56.2% of total jobs in town, an 8.7% increase over 2001. In contrast, private industry accounted for 36.4% of total employment in 2011, an increase of 9% since 2001. Other major economic sectors include health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services; these sectors also experienced significant growth between 2001 and 2011, with increases of 29.1% and 27.5%, respectively. These three sectors also experienced the greatest growth between 2001 and 2011.

The following industries experienced declines from 2001 to 2011: construction, manufacturing, finance and insurance, real estate and rental/leasing, and administrative/support and waste management/remediation services.

Unemployment. As shown in Table 6.1, Mansfield is performing relatively well in terms of employment growth and unemployment compared to regional and state averages. However, average annual wages, while exceeding the regional average, still lag the state average.

Table 6.1: Comparative Economic Indicators: Mansfield, the Region, and Connecticut			
	MANSFIELD	REMAINDER OF WINDHAM/TOLLAND COUNTIES	STATEWIDE
% Employment Growth 2001-2011	8.0%	2.4%	-3.2%
Unemployment Rate 2011	7.5%	8.5%	8.8%
Average Wage 2011	\$49,637	\$40,180	\$61,110

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Local Area Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

How Mansfield Compares to the Region. According to data comparing employment growth in Mansfield to the remainder of the Tolland-Windham region, there are three sectors which have seen strong growth in the region but not in Mansfield, presenting potential opportunities for new business growth:

- *Professional and technical services* (including legal, accounting, architecture, design, engineering, computer-related, and research and development services among others)

- *Administrative and waste management services* (including office administrative services, employment placement agencies, business services, security services, and building services among others)
- *Other services* (including automotive, consumer product repair, laundry and personal care services among others)¹

Data on employment relative to population for major industries oriented heavily to local consumers indicates that Mansfield is capturing more than its share of employment in food services, health care, and other services, but less than its share of retail employment. The level of retail activity is expected to grow with the completion of Storrs Center, although a large share of the new businesses are in food services (see Table 6.2).

	MANSFIELD	REMAINDER OF TOLLAND & WINDHAM COUNTIES
Retail	22.2	35.7
Accommodation & Food Services	43.0	21.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	42.8	18.1
Other Services	11.8	9.5

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013

B) MANSFIELD'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE HAS FISCAL IMPLICATIONS.

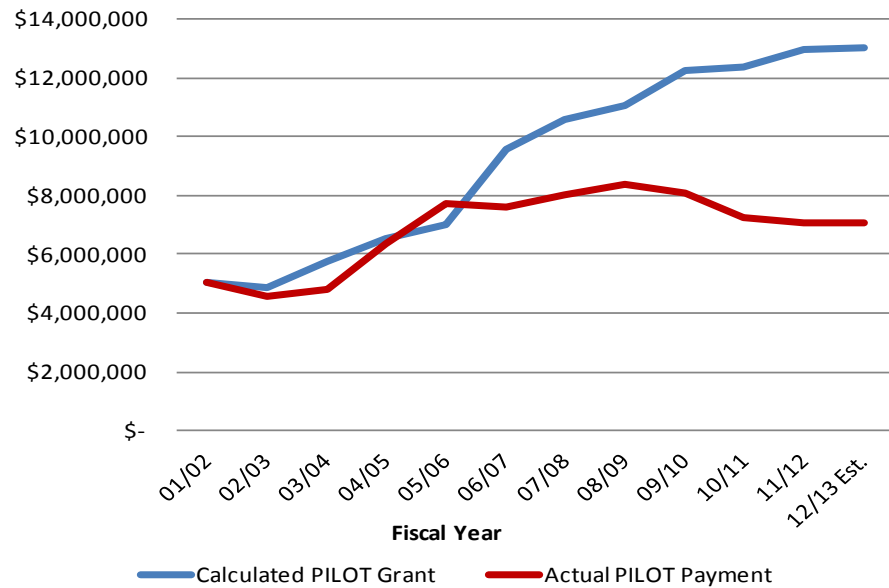
The key role played by UConn in Mansfield's economy has significant impacts not only on the nature of employment and business activity, but also on local tax revenue. The tax-exempt status of UConn and other state-owned property makes the town heavily dependent on state aid for local revenue, particularly given that **the value of tax exempt property in Mansfield exceeds the value of taxable property**. Intergovernmental transfers accounted for 37.45% of the Town's revenues in FY 2014, almost double the average of 18.8% for Connecticut municipalities in the 10,000-30,000 population range.²

The largest source of intergovernmental transfers, the state's Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for state-owned properties, is based on an effective tax rate that is about one-quarter of that paid by private property owners and in recent years the state has not paid the full amount. Moreover, major sources of state aid, including PILOT payments and Pequot Grants (unrestricted grants to municipalities from the proceeds of a state fund based on casino gaming revenue), have been flat or declining in recent years (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). While UConn provides some public services that reduce the Town's costs such as water and sewer services to some town residents and businesses, free access to the university bus system for residents, and campus police, these services are unlikely to fully compensate for the lower effective tax rate paid on UConn property.

¹ Data on subsectors is not available at the municipal level.

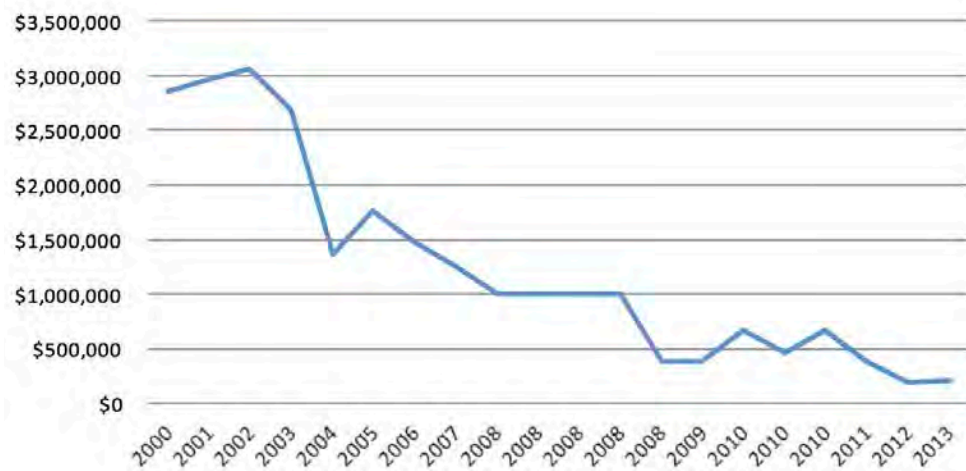
² Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

Figure 6.1: Mansfield PILOT Grant—Calculated and Actual by Fiscal Year, FY2002–2013



Source: Town of Mansfield

Figure 6.2: Mansfield Pequot Grant, 2000–2013



Source: Town of Mansfield

Declines in state aid create greater dependence on local revenues to maintain local public services. The ability to expand commercial and industrial land uses and tax revenues can reduce pressures to increase property tax rates with the attendant burden on residential taxpayers. Municipal tax studies have shown that commercial and industrial properties, along with agricultural land and open space, generate significantly more revenue than the cost of municipal services they require, whereas residential properties, especially single family houses, generate costs in excess of revenues (particularly because of the costs of school funding).³

Grand list data for Mansfield indicates that while the share of assessed property value comprised of commercial (including multi-family residential properties) and industrial property in FY2011 was about average relative to other Connecticut communities in the 10,000 to 30,000 population range, the assessed value per capita is very low. Because the overall cost of municipal services generally rises in proportion to population, this indicates that the cost of services absorbed by commercial and industrial property taxes in Mansfield is also relatively low. It also suggests that commercial and industrial property development in Mansfield could be significantly increased without leading to excessive development relative to other communities of its size (see Table 6.3).

³ See, for example, *Planning for Agriculture: Guide for Connecticut Municipalities, 2012. Edition*. The report cites data from nine Connecticut communities with populations ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 that show commercial and industrial properties costing municipalities a median of \$0.27 in services per \$1.00 in tax revenues compared to costs of \$1.09 for residential properties. Agricultural/open space land costs a comparable \$0.31 in services. It also cites national data showing a median of \$0.29 in services for commercial and industrial properties and \$0.35 in services for agricultural land/open space versus \$1.16 for residential properties.

Table 6.3: Measures of Fiscal Capacity Derived from Commercial/Industrial (C/I) Tax Base: Mansfield vs. Other Connecticut Communities Population 10,000-30,000, FY2011		
	C/I ASSESSED VALUE AS PERCENT OF TOTAL GRAND LIST	C/I ASSESSED VALUE PER CAPITA
Mansfield	13.2%	\$4,879
Mansfield Rank	29 of 66	58 of 66
Median	12.4%	\$13,193
Range	1.1% - 40.9%	\$2,822-\$48,042

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

LIGHT INDUSTRY: A GOOD FIT FOR MANSFIELD?

Many towns and cities are finding that light industrial businesses, when appropriately located, can be a great fit for their community. Unlike heavy industry—which often brings impacts such as noise and heavy truck activity—many light industrial uses occur without disruption to neighbors, and offer benefits such as jobs and contributions to the local tax base. Examples include warehouse space, wholesale facilities, and limited assembly or production activities—for instance, manufacture of high tech medical devices or production of gourmet foods.

Communities can craft zoning regulations that specify what is and is not permitted in a light industrial area. For instance, Mansfield could require that light industrial uses not pose nuisances, including smoke, gas, odors, dust, noise, vibrations, soot, or disruptive lighting. Mansfield could also regulate outdoor activities (e.g., loading, service, vehicle or equipment storage) to prevent disruption to neighbors.

Increases in commercial values resulting from the Storrs Center development are not reflected in the above comparison; however, the Storrs Center Fiscal Impact Study completed in October 2012 projects that the addition of Storrs Center to the Grand List will increase assessed commercial property values very significantly—by about 50 percent in 2014. Even with this increase, Mansfield will still remain on the low end of comparably-sized communities in assessed commercial and industrial property values per capita.

C) MANSFIELD'S WORKFORCE IS HIGHLY EDUCATED.

Understanding the skills and employment status of Mansfield's working residents can be important in determining what kinds of businesses and economic sectors the town is best positioned to attract as well as which of these are a good match for the employment needs of residents. In this regard, it is important to distinguish the characteristics of jobs in Mansfield, which are described above, from the characteristics of the town's workforce. Many employed residents of Mansfield work in other communities and conversely, many of Mansfield's workers live elsewhere.⁴

Lead Employment Sectors. Given the large number of local jobs in the education and health services sectors, it is not surprising that over half of the town's working residents work in these sectors, a much higher proportion than in the rest of the Tolland-Windham region or the larger Hartford Consolidated Statistical Area (CSA). The retail trade and the combined arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services sectors are next in importance (employing about 11% and 8% of residents respectively) and employ approximately the same proportion of residents as the region and the CSA. Small proportions of residents are employed in other industries, both in absolute terms, and in most cases, relative to the region and CSA.

Type of Employment. Half of Mansfield's working residents are employed in generally higher-paying management, business, science, and arts occupations, a considerably higher proportion than at the regional and CSA levels. Fewer, but still considerable numbers, are also employed in sales and office occupations, and in service occupations, in roughly the same proportions as at the regional and CSA levels. Residents working in these occupations are likely to include UConn students working in retail sales and food service occupations. Very few residents are employed in blue collar occupations such as construction, production, and transportation (see Figure 6.3).

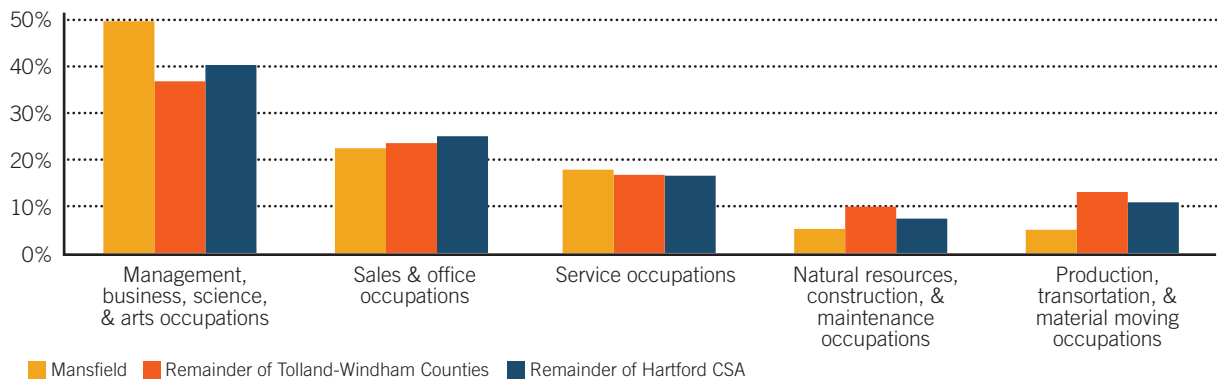
Education Levels. Consistent with high levels of employment in highly-skilled occupations, Mansfield residents are also highly educated. This is particularly evident in the percentage of residents over 25 with graduate or professional degrees. One-third hold such degrees, more than double that at the regional or CSA level. The town's highly-educated workforce can provide a considerable advantage in attracting businesses

⁴ According to data from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 41 percent of working Mansfield residents worked in other communities whereas 60 percent of workers employed in Mansfield lived elsewhere.

seeking highly-skilled workers (see Figure 6.4). The high educational and skill levels of Mansfield residents contribute to relatively high family incomes and low family poverty rates⁵ (see Table 6.4).

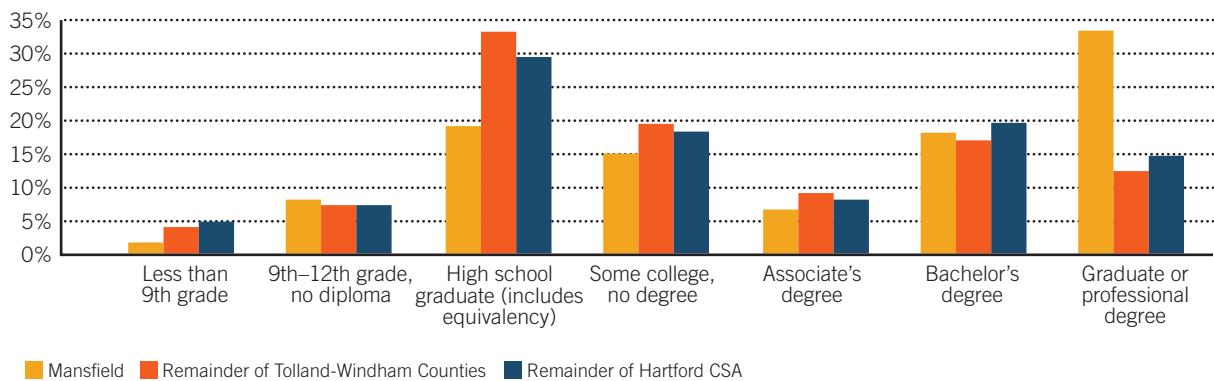
5 While household data is often used as a broader indicator of resident economic status, family data is used here to exclude the considerable number of student households, which would skew data downward and likely result in misleading comparisons to regional and CSA data.

Figure 6.3: Employment by Occupation, Population 16+ (2007–2011 average)



Source: American Community Survey; U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 6.4: Education Levels, Population Age 25+ (2007–2011 average)



Source: American Community Survey; U.S. Census Bureau

Table 6.4: Family Economic Status, 2007–2011 Average

	MANSFIELD	TOLLAND COUNTY	WINDHAM COUNTY	HARTFORD CSA
Median Family Income	\$90,518	\$80,333	\$72,060	\$83,214
Mean Family Income	\$111,101	\$93,033	\$81,664	\$102,093
Family Poverty Rate	5.1%	3.5%	8.5%	8.5%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

As noted earlier, Mansfield has a relatively low unemployment rate. However, unemployment rates vary significantly depending on educational levels. While the town residents without a high school diploma make up a relatively small proportion of the working age population (ages 25-64), they suffer disproportionately from high unemployment. Those with only a high school diploma are also somewhat more likely than average to be unemployed. This suggests the need for additional low- to middle-skill jobs and training opportunities to meet the employment needs of these residents (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment, Mansfield Residents Age 25-64: 2007-2011 Average		
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	% OF POPULATION 25-64
Less than high school graduate	43.2%	7.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.2%	39.7%
Some college or associate's degree	3.0%	
Bachelor's degree or higher	1.2%	53.0%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

2. Key Existing Economic Sectors

Mansfield has a number of established economic sectors that should be sustained and potentially expanded. These include higher education, food and beverage services, health care, and agriculture.

A) HIGHER EDUCATION/UCONN

Higher education is Mansfield's leading "traded sector" by a wide margin, and is less a sector than a single dominant institution, the University of Connecticut. With over 22,000 students and over 5,000 faculty and staff, UConn draws income into the community and creates jobs. Direct employment at UConn has increased over the past decade. State government employment in Mansfield, primarily accounted for by UConn, increased by about 500 jobs between 2001 and 2011. The average state government wage in 2011 was almost \$60,000, significantly more than for most other economic sectors within the town. Additional direct spending by students and visitors on off-campus housing, retail, food services, entertainment and recreation, and other local goods and services brings significant additional income to the town economy.

Direct income to the university is further circulated within the community through spending by the university, administration, faculty and staff on local goods and services. Other indirect sources of income and jobs are businesses that are operated by university faculty, including a considerable number of small consulting businesses, and businesses that have been established locally to commercialize university research.



Accommodation and food services businesses in Mansfield employ over 1,000 people (Storrs Center shown at left).

B) FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES

The accommodation and food services sector employed 1,139 wage and salary workers in 2011. Most of the employment is in food and drinking places—Mansfield has only a small number of lodging establishments, including two hotels and one bed and breakfast. The relatively high proportion of jobs to local population in this sector likely reflects strong demand for food and beverage services among the large student population.

Employment in this sector increased by about 250 between 2001 and 2011, or over 25 percent. The quality of jobs, however, is very low with average wages of under \$20,000 in 2011, lower than in any other economic sector for which data is available. Many of these jobs are part-time, which accounts in part for the low wage levels.

C) HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

This sector employed 1,134 wage and salary workers in 2011. It can also be considered partly traded and partly sheltered since some of the larger health care organizations such as Natchaug Hospital, VNA East and large specialty practices serve a regional population while some smaller practices primarily serve a local population. The relatively high proportion of jobs to local population in this sector indicates that a significant portion of clients are from outside the community.

Employment in this sector increased by about 250 between 2001 and 2011, or almost 30 percent. The average wage in 2011 was about \$42,000, somewhat below the overall average wage for jobs in Mansfield.

D) AGRICULTURE

While not a major economic driver in terms of income or jobs, agriculture remains important to Mansfield. 22,175 acres of farm and forest (75% of Mansfield) contribute to the Town's economy by providing "ecosystem services," such as clean water, and by requiring lower levels of Town services than residences. Preserving these benefits is critical to Mansfield's business and fiscal success. Agricultural enterprises use the most business-related acreage in town (16%). Agriculture (farm and forest) provides residents with locally-grown food products, creates opportunities for value-added food processing businesses, and supports farm and forest-based tourism. Preserving and expanding the agricultural economy can help to maintain a diversified local economy, contribute to lower property taxes, and preserve the town's rural character—which also has potential as a major attraction for prospective businesses and employees.

There are many elements to maintaining and strengthening the town's agricultural identity, but one critical component is maintaining agricultural activity. Farmland that is conserved and farmed is the ultimate goal. In this regard, agriculture in Mansfield faces many of the same challenges being faced throughout the state, the region and even the country.

i) Private agriculture in Mansfield

Agriculture is changing across America. As farms get bigger in the Midwest, farms in New England are getting smaller but more numerous, up an average of 19% in New England between 2002 and 2007 (with a 0.1% increase in Connecticut). Following regional trends, the median farm size in Tolland County decreased from 38 acres in 2002 to 25 acres in 2007, while the number of farms increased from 398 to 484.⁶ The 2007 Cen-

6 2007 Census of Agriculture. State and County Data: Connecticut.



Photo credit: James D. Gilligan

Mansfield's agricultural enterprises are a valued part of the town's economy (Mountain Dairy shown above).

Table 6.6: Mansfield's Agricultural Enterprises 2014

Arrowhead Farms	Honey, goat milk, pumpkins, berries, vegetables, angora wool, and non-edibles	Mountain Dairy	Milk and dairy products
Bailey's Maple Syrup and Honey, LLC	Maple syrup and honey	Phenix Farm	Maple syrup, hay/alfalfa
Bird Walk Farm	Eggs, seasonal lamb, pork, chicken	Pleasant Valley Harvest	Organic fruits and vegetables
Cedar Ledge Tree Farm	Christmas trees. Natural stone for walls, walks, patios. Pumpkins. Firewood	Round the Bend Farm	Vegetables
Country Stop & Goods	Produce and country goods	Sawmill Brook Farm	Equine board facility offering beginner through advanced lessons in all disciplines. Miles of trail riding. Facility also houses Magnolia Run horse rescue.
Don's Rhubarb	Rhubarb	Shundahai Farm	Fruits and vegetables. CSA.
Foxfire Farm	Raw milk	Storrs Farmers Market	Year-round farmers market
Fox Fire Stables	Equine boarding facility with indoor and outdoor riding arenas.	Storrs Regional FFA	Christmas trees, plants, eggs
Gardens at Bassetts Bridge Farm	Rhubarb, tomatoes, asparagus, pumpkins, blueberries, hanging baskets, annuals and perennials	Thistle Springs Farm	Hay and beef cattle. Sand and gravel
G.M. Thompson and Sons, Inc.	Agricultural supply	Thompson's Christmas Tree Farm	Christmas trees
Hillside Farm	Milk, mulch bark and feed hay	Three Green Acres/Chelsea's Blue Ribbon Lamb	Sheep-lamb for meat, wool blankets, show animals (Hampshire Sheep and Jersey Cattle)
Ledgecrest Greenhouses	Annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables plants and spring flowering plants	Tri-County Greenhouse	Annuals, perennials, herbs and vegetables plants, mums
Maple Crest Farm	Rhubarb, blueberries, raspberries are sold wholesale. Tree fruit, jams, honey, yellow wax beans, potted raspberry plants. Aloe, Christmas cactus, hand-painted egg shells. By appointment only.	Twin Ponds Farm	Hay, lumber, firewood, nursery stock, plant stock, seasonal berries
Matthews Farm	Blueberries	University of Connecticut	Ice cream, eggs, plants and flowers. Annual live stock sale.
Mike's Stand	Organic tomatoes, peas, broccoli products from other farms as seasonally available.	Valley Farms	Kobe-style beef, hogs, free-range eggs
		Windover Farm	Heritage swine, cattle and sheep, pork and lamb.

sus of Agriculture identified 19 farms in Mansfield, five of which support farming as a primary occupation.⁷ Agriculture in Mansfield is diverse, producing dairy products, livestock and meat products, fruits and vegetables, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees and nursery stock, as well as agritourism experiences. Every two to three years, the Mansfield Agriculture Committee inventories all agricultural operations in town and develops a “Mansfield Grown” brochure and website link (www.mansfieldct.org/mansfieldgrown). The last inventory in 2012 identified close to 40 agricultural enterprises—19 self-identified as farms, plus other enterprises including one Community Supported



A 2010 Town survey identified approximately 40 agricultural enterprises in Mansfield, including farms, farm stands, and agritourism destinations (Stearns Farm shown above).

Agriculture (CSA) operation, farm stands, agritourism destinations, and retail outlets. A 2010 survey by the Town identified close to 40 agricultural enterprises—19 self-identified as farms, plus other enterprises including farm stands, agritourism destinations, retail outlets, and so on. Agriculture in Mansfield is diverse, producing dairy products, livestock and meat products, fruits and vegetables, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees and nursery stock, as well as agritourism experiences.

Scale of operations. While the Mansfield dairy farms own or lease over 1,800 acres of land, the majority of Mansfield farms are small, under 50 acres (some under 5 acres) and with sales less than \$50,000. Seven (39%) of 19 Mansfield farms identified in the 2007 agricultural census had sales over \$50,000 (2 horticultural operations, 3 dairy operations, 2 animal operations, including products, and 1 cattle and calves operation). While Mansfield farms make up just under 4% of farms in Tolland County, they account for more than 7% of the operations in Tolland County with sales over \$50,000. Mansfield has one of only three dairy processing facilities in the state. This facility has a producer/handler license that enables it to compete with federal milk prices and remain competitive.

The 2007 Census showed that the average net income for farms in Tolland County was \$15,307, up significantly from an average of \$5,833 in 2003 but still significantly below the state average of \$25,087.⁸ Assuming the average net income for Mansfield farms is the same as for Tolland County it is not surprising that only 26% of Mansfield farms support farming as the primary occupation, versus 55% of all Connecticut farms and 49% of farms in New England. If we assume the 19 farms in Mansfield make the average Tolland County farm income it would account for 0.1% of all the income earned by residents in Mansfield.⁹ In a 2010 survey of Mansfield farmers, some of the major challenges identified by respondents were “financial stability, lack of funding, [and] input costs.”

7 2007 Census of Agriculture. Data by Zip Code: 06268 and 06269.

8 2007 Census of Agriculture. State and County Data: Connecticut.

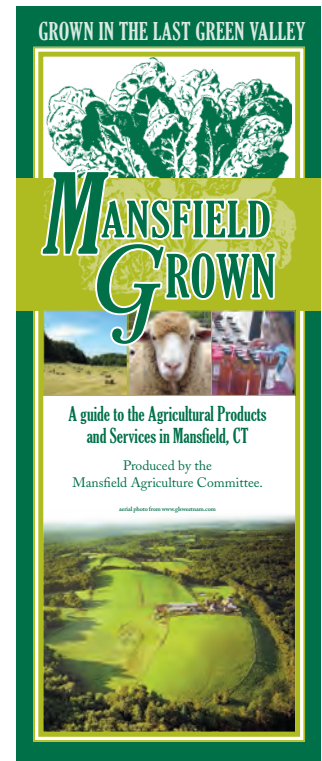
9 Assumes 11,027 jobs in the community at average salary of \$49,637 per Peter Kwass, Mansfield Economy Fact Sheet.

Employment. Data from the 2010 Census showed that less than 2% of the Mansfield population was employed in agriculture compared with Connecticut communities with the highest proportion of residents employed in agriculture, such as Scotland and Preston that have between 4% and 8% of the population.¹⁰ The majority of farms in Tolland County do not hire farm labor and of the farms that do, 90% hire fewer than 10 workers. The Connecticut Department of Labor reports 398 jobs in Tolland County in the agriculture, fishing and hunting sector in 2011, making up just 1% of all Tolland County jobs.¹¹ Access to farm labor is a challenge for local and regional farms.

Markets. According to the 2010 survey of Mansfield farmers, the majority of farmers market their products direct to consumers through roadside stands or farmers markets and/or sell wholesale to restaurants and stores. Of the 19 operations with self-identified farmers, 11 do direct marketing only, one does wholesale only and seven do a combination of direct marketing and wholesale. While this type of marketing and sales usually ensures that farmers get the highest possible price for their products, it also requires that farmers spend a lot of time building and maintaining relationships with many individual buyers. Direct marketing and direct wholesale marketing also puts the burden of transportation and distribution on the farmer.

Mansfield is home to a year-round farmers market, Storrs Farmers Market, providing a direct-market outlet to local farmers and value-added producers. (Currently just under 30% of the producers listed on the Storrs Farmers Market website are from Mansfield.) In addition to the Farmers Market, the Town produces a “Mansfield Grown” brochure featuring a guide to locally produced agricultural products and services—the brochure includes 29 farms and stores (in addition to the farmers market) providing locally produced goods. One Mansfield farm offers a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. *Farmfresh.org*, a local food guide for Southern New England, identifies 6 producers in Mansfield with farm stands making direct sales to consumers.

Ownership and Management. Mansfield has a mix of entrepreneurial and lifestyle farmers. The vast majority of farm households in the U.S. rely on off farm income to support themselves¹² and there is no evidence this is likely to change. In 2012, off-farm income sources are forecasted to account for about 84% of the national average farm household income, compared with about 16% from farming activities.¹³ Farming is often a lifestyle choice as much as an economic endeavor. This means that farmers often lack, or fail to apply, the business skills required to grow their enterprises, establish track records



The Mansfield Grown brochure provides information on local agricultural products and producers.

10 Percentage of Population with Farming, Fishing & Forestry Jobs in Connecticut by Zip Code: 06268 and 06269. <http://zipatlas.com/us/ct/storrs-mansfield/zip-code-comparison/percentage-farming-jobs.htm>

11 Tolland County: Covered Employment and Wages by Industry. 2011 QCEW Program Data. http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/cty_tolland.asp

12 Schnepf, Randy. “U.S. Farm Income.” Congressional Research Service. December 10, 2012.

13 Schnepf, Randy. “U.S. Farm Income.” Congressional Research Service. December 10, 2012.

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture, a popular way for consumers to buy food directly from farmers through a subscription program. In this model, the consumer pays for a “farm share” (a percentage of the food produced that season) up front and receives a weekly box of produce during the growing season. This provides farmers the opportunity to do marketing and have cash flow during the winter and spring seasons.

of sales, and qualify for investments that would help them further expand. While those who choose to farm as a lifestyle can and do make important contributions to the agricultural landscape, the environment, and other indirect economic and social aspects of quality of life, continuing agriculture into the future will likely require a mix of lifestyle farmers and entrepreneurial farmers. The entrepreneurial farmers will require the same type of business planning, management, and financing assistance that any small business needs. By understanding the potential for farming as a business, the Town can encourage innovative enterprises and help connect agricultural entrepreneurs with appropriate business-related services.

The average age of farmers in Connecticut is 57.6, higher than the New England average of 56.6.¹⁴ While the average age of farmers has been a concern regionally and nationally for a number of years, in recent years more young people have been choosing to farm. With the presence of UConn, Mansfield is in a position to engage young people in its agricultural community in ways that would be harder for a more isolated community. There is evidence that some young people are already interested in farming in Mansfield. More can be done to attract and retain a new generation of farmers. Young farmers often find farmland unaffordable. It will also be important to work with the current generation on transition plans where there is interest in passing the farm to another generation.

ii) UConn agriculture in Mansfield

As Connecticut’s land grant university, UConn owns and maintains approximately one quarter of the active farmland in Mansfield, and is home to several agricultural operations including an Equine Center specializing in the breeding of Morgan horses, the Dairy Center and Creamery, Livestock Unit and Poultry Unit. Many of these facilities are open to the public 365 days a year, making UConn a popular agri-tourism destination. UConn’s Dairy Bar, serving award winning ice cream produced in the Creamery from UConn dairy cows, is one of the top 10 tourism destinations in Connecticut, attracting over 200,000 visitors per year.¹⁵ UConn officials are committed to keeping the agricultural land it currently uses in active use.¹⁶

14 2007 Census of Agriculture. State and County Data.

15 Schirm, Nicole. “Education and so much more!” Holstein World; New England Holstein Annual. March 2013.

16 Phone Interview. Greg Weidemann, Dean, UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. 4/8/13.

3. Potential Growth Opportunities

A) RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

The increasing emphasis at UConn on research and development and university-industry relationships provide Mansfield with an opportunity to capture technology companies spinning out of UConn and those seeking research partnerships with the university.

The State of Connecticut economic development strategy includes a focus on UConn as a driver of 21st century economy prosperity. Major planned investments by the State in UConn over the next 10-20 years promise to significantly affect the Mansfield economy.

- **NextGenCT.** This initiative, which includes significant investments in campus facilities and increases in faculty and enrollments, focuses on expanding the level of research, technology commercialization and new enterprise development at the Storrs Campus, which could spur increased demand for R&D, office, and light manufacturing space in Mansfield. The increase in students and faculty could also generate growth in other economic sectors including retail, accommodation and food services, and other consumer services.
- **UConn Technology Park.** The Tech Park, as currently envisioned, will involve the build-out of up to 900,000 square feet over a 10-20 year timeframe. The first building in the park, the Innovation Partnership Building (IPB), will be State-owned and operated. Most of the other buildings are expected to be privately developed and to house corporate research facilities, emerging technology firms, and possibly federal labs. While Tech Park land is expected to remain State property, these private facilities are envisioned to be equipment-intensive and thus to generate a high level of property taxes to Mansfield on the improvements (buildings and equipment). While the nature, scale and timing of the Park's construction remain undetermined at this time, its completion has the potential to result in significant business development, job creation, and local property tax revenues over time. In the shorter run, the graduation of firms from the new incubator could increase the number of second stage firms desiring to expand within Mansfield as they seek to maintain proximity to UConn facilities and relationships with UConn researchers.
- **UConn Technology Commercialization Partners.** UConn and the State of Connecticut have greatly expanded resources to support technology commercialization and entrepreneurship. UConn's Office of the Vice President for Research operates a variety of programs specifically aimed at promoting technology-based economic development related to UConn's research strengths. These programs provide resources for companies seeking the expertise of UConn faculty and researchers, manage the intellectual property created at the university in life and physical sciences, assist in creating new start-up companies based on technologies developed by faculty and staff, and accelerate the establishment and development of entrepreneurial companies through incubator space and support services.

- **Connecticut Innovations (CI)** is another important source of support for startup and early stage companies. CI provides a variety of financing and technical assistance tools, including SBIR matching grants, the TechStart Accelerator Program, the Seed Investment Fund, ELI Whitney Fund early stage venture capital funding, the Clean Tech Fund, and the BioScience Facilities Fund, which finances wet lab and related space.

Mansfield already has a small base of research and development (R&D) and technology firms that, while generally small and not highly visible, generate income, tax revenues, and high-quality employment, and have the potential to grow. While the UConn campus provides fertile ground for technology commercialization and entrepreneurship, Mansfield is hampered by a shortage of R&D space and land zoned for R&D facilities as firms grow and look for larger space. Some firms are reported by UConn staff and Town officials to have relocated outside of Mansfield for this reason. Without the development of additional R&D space, Mansfield will continue to lose growing technology firms to other communities.

B) PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Mansfield has a significant number of small firms (generally four or fewer employees) that provide a wide range of business and professional services in regional or even national markets. These include engineering and architectural services, computer programming and computer systems design, graphic design, environmental consulting, management consulting, and other business services. As described earlier, these types of businesses (classified under professional and technical services and administrative services) have been growing in the Tolland-Windham region during the past decade but not in Mansfield. More attention to accommodating the growth needs of these types of firms could yield more business and employment growth within Mansfield.

C) RETAIL AND CONSUMER SERVICES

Data indicate that Mansfield has a relatively small retail sector. Increases in students and faculty at UConn as well as the ability to realize the growth opportunities described above will increase the base of consumers (i.e., residents, employees, and students), potentially creating greater demand for retail and consumer service businesses. However, because the Mansfield population has typically dropped during the summer, the seasonal nature of the market has made it difficult in the past for some retail and service businesses to survive over the long term. More summer programs on campus, as well as advertising to year-round residents, would help support retail, especially in Storrs Center and other areas near campus. As UConn upgrades residence halls with air conditioning and other improvements, it is expected that summer programs will expand.

The new Storrs Center has met with considerable initial success in leasing ground floor space to commercial tenants. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Storrs Center

merchants did better than expected in the summer of 2013, their first summer. The experience at Storrs Center with commercial lease and occupancy rates during the next few years will provide one indication of the potential for further expanding retail and consumer services within the town.

D) TOURISM

Mansfield has a wide variety of tourism attractions that could draw more visitors, particularly from within the southeastern New England market. Mansfield is located approximately 22 miles from I-91, a major North/South transportation corridor, and 30 miles from I-90, a major East/West corridor. The town is 20 miles from Hartford, 85 miles from Boston and 137 miles from Manhattan. This location places the town in a prime tourism location. While the town lacks a major tourism destination, its location in the Last Green Valley combined with a mix of arts, history and cultural heritage, outdoor recreation, and tourism venues and events offer a diverse tourism experience.

- **Arts.** Mansfield offers a number of high-quality performing and visual arts attractions, primarily through UConn. For more information, see Chapter 5: Community Life.
- **History and Cultural Heritage.** Historical and cultural heritage attractions include: the Gurley Gristmill, the only remaining stone mill of its kind in Connecticut; the Mansfield Historical Society and Museum, which offers exhibits and educational programming related to Mansfield's 300 year history; and the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History, which hosts exhibits integrating Connecticut's natural and cultural history.
- **Outdoor Recreation.** Several parks and recreation areas are located within the town, including Mansfield Hollow State Park, the Albert E. Moss Forest, Shelter Falls Park, the David Storrs Chapin Coney Rock Preserve, the Knowlton Hill Preserve, and the Wolf Rock Nature Preserve. These sites offer a wide range of outdoor recreation activities, including hiking, biking, boating, fishing, bird watching, rock climbing, and cross-country skiing. The new Adventure Park at Storrs, an aerial park, offers a family-oriented rope and zip line course. Special events include the annual Wilimantic Down River Canoe and Kayak Race from Tolland to Mansfield, and Walktober, a series of hundreds of hikes and other regional events that attract thousands of visitors annually from New England and beyond.
- **Agri-tourism.** According to the 2007 census of agriculture 2% of CT farms (and 2% of Tolland County farms) offered agri-tourism and recreational services, ranking Connecticut number three in New England for the percentage of farms involved in agri-tourism. Local agri-tourism attractions include UConn, Cedar Ledge Tree Farm, with a range of fall and Christmas season activities, and Bassett's Bridge Farm, best known for its stroll gardens displaying perennials, annuals, herbs, shrubs, and trees. These provide a powerful engine for further development of agri-tourism, cross-marketing eco-tourism, and adventure tourism opportunities that can be compatible with agricultural enterprises.



Photo credit: Peter Morenus/UConn

UConn's Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry is a unique attraction, drawing people of all ages.



Mansfield offers a range outdoor recreation activities, including kayaking, hiking, fishing and cross-country skiing (River Park shown above).

The 2013 Tourism Impact Report commissioned by the The Last Green Valley (TLGV) demonstrates the potential for tourism as an economic growth sector. Tourism activities in the region have grown substantially over the past few years, from 1.3 million visitors with \$158 million in economic impact in 2010 to 1.9 million visitors in 2013 with \$278 million in economic impact. While 66% of visitors to the Last Green Valley are day trippers (compared to 35% statewide), the number of visitors with overnight stays increased from 25% to 34%. Visitors with higher household incomes spent more per visit; however, those with lower incomes visited more frequently.¹⁷

Mansfield and the surrounding region are well-positioned to tie into the state's tourism branding and marketing initiative, "Connecticut...Still Revolutionary." The initiative seeks to link the state's historic past with its legacy and continued role as a center of innovation. The region's historic sites, some tied to Revolutionary War figures such as Nathan Hale, Samuel Huntington, and Governor Jonathan Trumbull, its role in the industrial revolution, and its significance today as a center of leading edge research at UConn, can all be capitalized upon to strengthen the region's position as a tourism destination.

Expanding tourism in Mansfield could strengthen the town's economy and, in particular, create more activity during the quiet summer months when UConn is not in full session. Expanding agri-tourism offers the additional benefit of providing supplemental income to farmers. This is likely to require more intensive local efforts to highlight the town's attractions within the regional tourism market that could include the development of themed trails, tourism packages, and special events, and working with other towns in the region to provide a more diverse and appealing visitor experience. It may also require further development of local visitor infrastructure (e.g., inns, bed and breakfasts, and campgrounds) that could help to attract more visitors to Mansfield and increase their spending while here.

E) AGRICULTURE: LOCAL MARKETING AND VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION

Connecticut in general and Mansfield in particular are both utterly dependent on food that comes from hundreds and even thousands of miles away. A 2012 report by the Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy estimated that locally produced food accounts for 2.5% of Connecticut's total food expenditures. That means 97.5% of the value of all food is imported from other states and countries.

Although Connecticut is likely to remain dependent on other states and countries for food, increasing the amount of food produced locally is a worthy goal. The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development has proposed a target of 5% of food expenditures on locally-grown food by the year 2020. One of the ways of facilitating increased local production is through more effective marketing. Mansfield is well served by a year-

¹⁷ 2013 Tourism Impact Report summary sheet, commissioned by The Last Green Valley and prepared by Witan Intelligence.

round farmer's market and has one active CSA farm. Mansfield can build on this modest current agricultural marketing platform and benefit from lessons learned by others and the structures they develop.

Those seeking to farm full-time (and even part-time) often need to move from production of raw materials to production of value-added products. Even those producing raw materials, must, if they choose to market at any significant scale, meet ever higher safety and quality standards to find and maintain a footing in the marketplace. Some of the costs associated with value-added production—trainings and certifications, labeling and packaging, and enhanced distribution—can be shared among groups of farmers, but only when there is sufficient volume of similar product to warrant it. With the exception of its dairy operation, Mansfield's agricultural activity is so diverse and currently at a scale so small as to make it difficult to justify individual farmers investing in any particular type of shared value-added facility. However, if subsidized facilities come on line, existing and future Mansfield farmers will have the opportunity to develop new products and serve new markets. Such a facility could enable the Town to promote a regional approach to agricultural facilities and marketing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The development of Mansfield's economy is influenced by its economic development resources. These include its human resources, entrepreneurial climate, physical infrastructure, economic institutions, and general quality of life. Effectively utilizing these resources and filling critical resource gaps can support and accelerate economic development efforts.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Programs and services available to technology businesses are described in the "Potential Growth Opportunities" section above. Other regional and state programs and services for businesses include the following:

- **Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).** The SBDC's central office and one of its regional centers are located at UConn's Storrs campus. SBDCs provide businesses with assistance on a range of business functions, including business plan development, financial planning, loan packaging, marketing, employee management, and regulatory compliance. They also provide specialized assistance in government contracting, international trade, and for minority, women and veteran businesses.
- At the state level, the **Connecticut Development Authority** (now including Connecticut Innovations) offers financing programs addressing a range of business needs. In addition to the Bioscience Facilities Fund described earlier, these include loans and loan guarantees for small and mid-sized businesses; grants, seed financing, venture capital, and loans for early-stage and technology-intensive businesses; targeted programs providing export financing, loans and loan guarantees for advanced energy projects; and loans for IT companies.
- The **Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development** offers two business loan programs, the Small Business Express Program and
- loans to manufacturers for projects with strong economic development potential. DECD, both directly and through partner organizations, provides technical assistance to businesses on a range of issues, and also works with qualifying businesses to provide state tax incentives.

CAREER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

- Workforce development services for jobseekers and employers in Mansfield are provided by the **Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (WIB)**, one of five regional workforce investment boards in Connecticut. The career center serving Mansfield is located in Willimantic. Services to job seekers include job search assistance, career counseling, job development and placement, seminars on a wide range of topics, training referrals, and training funds for individuals with high barriers to employment to be used for training by certified training providers. Services to employers include employee recruitment assistance, reimbursement for on-the-job training, and workforce literacy assistance. The WIB also provides services to at-risk and out-of-school youth.
- **Windham Technical High School** is the regional technical school serving Mansfield and 19 other communities. The school serves high school students who seek a combination of traditional academics and training in a trade or technology field. The school offers students training in architectural technology, electrical, automotive technology, electronics, carpentry, health technology, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, manufacturing technology, and culinary arts. It also offers adults training as dental assistants.
- **Eastern Connecticut State University**, in addition to its bachelor's and post-graduate degree programs,

offers short-term (six months or less) on-site and on-line training in a range of career fields.

- **UConn** offers a range of adult learning opportunities, both on-site and on-line.

CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM RESOURCES

- **Mystic Country** (www.mystic.org) (Eastern Regional Tourism District) is the state's designated marketing organization for eastern Connecticut, operated by the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. The organization hosts a detailed tourism website, produces and distributes a printed visitors' guide, provides advertising opportunities for tourism businesses, and assists meeting and event planners. With the highest-profile tourism attractions, notably the casinos, Mystic Seaport, and the Long Island Sound coastline, concentrated in the southeast, the northeast suffers from a less intensive focus than was the case when it had its own marketing organization.
- **The Last Green Valley Inc.** (www.tlgv.org) is a 35-town National Heritage Corridor in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts that promotes heritage and natural resource tourism as part of its mission. TLGV hosts an extensive website that includes a calendar of events and an interactive map, publishes guides and maps, and sponsors special events such as the annual Walktober. It also provides co-operative advertising opportunities for its business members.
- **WindhamARTS** was organized to foster and promote the arts and cultural life of the Windham Region. It has been named by the state as Northeast CT's Designated Regional Service Organization for the arts. The organization hosts an on-line arts calendar.

In addition to these regional organizations, the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce and the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce publish downloadable

and printed brochures that provide extensive listings of tourism venues and events, lodging, restaurants and other visitor information. However, the chambers have not been actively involved in tourism development strategies or focused marketing initiatives.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

The quality of public infrastructure to serve businesses and the availability of housing to meet workforce needs are important factors in economic development. In Mansfield, the limited availability of water and sewer service, and its absence in many areas zoned for business development, as well as the limited range of housing choices present potential barriers to future economic development. Housing and physical infrastructure are addressed in detail in other sections of the Plan (see Chapters 7 and 9).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY & GRANT PROGRAMS

Economic development functions in Mansfield are handled by the Town Manager and the Director of Planning and Development. Mansfield does not have a dedicated staff position for economic development.

- Town staff are assisted by a recently re-established **Economic Development Commission**, whose mission is to conduct research into local economic conditions and trends, make recommendations regarding economic development, and coordinate the activities of and cooperate with organizations to promote economic development.
- Two chambers of commerce serve Mansfield businesses—the **Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce** and the **Tolland County Chamber of Commerce**. Both chambers provide tourism information and also focus on business networking, advertising and promotional opportunities and legislative affairs. As relatively small chambers, neither plays an extensive role in economic development.

- In 2014, Mansfield joined the **Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)**, which provides a wide variety of services to its member communities, including transportation planning assistance and coordination with CTDOT. Another possible resource with this move to the Capitol Region is the **Metro-Hartford Alliance**, the economic development organization for the Hartford region, including all members of CRCOG. As part of its efforts, Metro-Hartford Alliance prepares the Hartford Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which prioritizes projects and is required to obtain project funding from the Economic Development Administration. Mansfield is currently covered by the 2010 Eastern Connecticut CEDS, which will remain in effect until the Hartford Region CEDS is updated to include Mansfield and other new CRCOG communities.
- At the state level, the Office of Policy and Management manages the **Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)**, which funds economic development, community conservation and quality of life projects for localities that are ineligible to receive Urban Action bonds.
- The State Department of Economic and Community Development manages the **Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program**, which provides funding and technical support to communities with populations of less than 50,000 for projects that achieve local community and economic development objectives.

ACTION PLAN

Each chapter within this Plan includes an action plan: a set of suggestions for how to put the Plan to work and begin transforming ideas into action. Each action plan identifies some of the **entities that are expected to have a key role in** achieving specific action items (town departments, committees/ commissions, outside organizations, etc.); a target timeframe to complete each action; and the types of resources that we anticipate may be needed for implementation (staff time, volunteer time, operating budget, capital improvement program, grants, etc.).

Action plans include:

- **Goals** that describe the outcomes our community hopes to achieve;
- **Strategies** for advancing each goal; and
- **Actions**—specific steps our community can take over the short term (before end of 2019), medium term (between 2020 and 2024) and long term (between 2025 and 2035) in support of each strategy.

Action plans are tools for focusing efforts and resources on the issues our community cares about most. The action plans will:

- Guide town officials as they continue to shape policies and allocate resources in the years to come;
- Refocus the efforts of town staff and committees as they work to advance community goals;
- Provide a foundation for developing annual budgets and work-plans; and
- Evolve over time in response to new opportunities and circumstances.

Action plans set the agenda for our community’s many officials, volunteers, committee members and staff for the years ahead, and align their work with the community’s vision **but do not provide a guarantee that resources will be available to advance each action.** While these action plans are comprehensive in nature, they are not intended to preclude the Town from pursuing other actions as opportunities arise. **As additional actions and initiatives are contemplated, they should be evaluated with regard to how the action will help to advance the vision and goals** contained in the overall Plan.

Key of Abbreviations	
TOWN DEPARTMENTS & SERVICES	
Building & Housing Inspection	Town of Mansfield Department of Building & Housing Inspection
DPW	Town of Mansfield Department of Public Works
Facilities	Town of Mansfield Facilities Management Department
Finance	Town of Mansfield Finance Department
Fire	Division of Fire & Emergency Services / Office of the Fire Marshal
Fire Marshal	Office of the Fire Marshal
Human Services	Town of Mansfield Department of Human Services
Information Technology	Town of Mansfield Information Technology Department
Library	Town of Mansfield Public Library
Parks & Rec	Town of Mansfield Parks & Recreation Department
Planning	Town of Mansfield Planning & Zoning Office
Police	Mansfield Resident State Trooper's Office
OTHER ABBREVIATIONS	
CT DEEP	State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
CT DPH	State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
EHHD	Eastern Highlands Health District
Emergency Management	Emergency Management Advisory Council
IWA	Inland Wetland Agency
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
Town/Gown	Town/University Relations Committee

CHAPTER 6: DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Goal 6.1

Mansfield has balanced economic development efforts with sensitivity to preserving the town’s unique blend of rural character and college town amenities to create an attractive location for businesses, workers and residents.

Additional economic development will provide multiple benefits, including increasing the number and type of available jobs and helping the Town to offset the impact of continuing declines in state revenues on municipal operations, services and budgets. These objectives must be balanced with the desire to preserve and protect the rural character of residential areas of the community.

Measures of Effectiveness:

- Number of businesses locating on previously developed sites
- Increase in assessed value of taxable commercial and light industrial properties

Strategy A | Ensure Mansfield has sufficient resources and capacity for economic development.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Collaborate with local, state and regional entities to advance economic development efforts. Potential partners include Mansfield Downtown Partnership, UConn, MetroHartford Alliance, Small Business Development Center, DECD, CT Department of Agriculture, Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance, and CTInnovations.	Economic Development Team Town Council	Ongoing	Staff Time
2. Expand economic development capacity of Town staff. Given their extensive other duties, it will be difficult for either the Town Manager or Director of Planning and Development to play a lead operating and staff role in economic development efforts. Consequently, if practicable, the Town should consider creating a staff position or contracting for these services. This expansion of service could be done independently or by partnering with neighboring towns to fund a joint position or contract.	Town Council	Short Term	Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy B | Continue to focus new commercial and light industrial development in the Four Corners, Storrs Center, Perkins Corner and Route 195/Route 6 areas to preserve rural character in other parts of the community (see Section 1.B of this chapter for more information on light industry as an option for Mansfield).

See Chapter 8 for additional information on why these areas have been identified as the primary commercial/business development focus areas. For strategies and actions related to expanding agricultural businesses and activities, see Goal 6.4.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Expand allowable uses in the four target areas to include Research and Development (R&D) and light industrial uses. <i>See text box in Section 1.B of this chapter for a description of light industrial uses.</i>	See Goal 6.5 for specific strategies and actions related to land use and zoning, including identification of development standards to be addressed.		
2. Consider expanding R&D and light industrial uses to the UConn's Depot Campus if the property transitions from State to private ownership.	See Goal 6.5 for specific strategies and actions related to land use and zoning, including identification of development standards to be addressed.		
3. Allow for small-scale commercial businesses and development in the King Hill Road, Route 32/Route 195, Mansfield Depot and Mansfield Center areas. Development standards for each area should take into account surrounding context. For example, new development in the King Hill Road area may differ in form and scale (due to its location adjacent to the core UConn campus) from development in Mansfield Center, one of Mansfield's historic villages.	See Goal 6.5 for specific strategies and actions related to land use and zoning.		
4. Support improvements to water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements, in the four commercial target areas to support business growth and redevelopment. Availability of public infrastructure is a critical component for economic and business development; this type of infrastructure allows for more compact development, reducing the amount of land needed for development. Two of the four target areas (Storrs Center and Route 195/Route 6 areas) currently have water and wastewater infrastructure. Water and sewer infrastructure for Four Corners are expected to be available in 2016. In the longer term, water and sewer service to Perkins Corner may be available through connections to Windham water and sewer services. <i>See Goals 9.1 and 9.2 for more specific actions related to transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure.</i>	Town Council PZC	Ongoing	CIP Grants Bonds Property owners Developers

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy C | Maintain and enhance community services and amenities that make Mansfield a great place to live and work. See Chapter 5 for related goals and strategies.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Promote continuing education and professional development programs available through UConn and ECSU. Include information on Town website and promote through Library and Mansfield Community Center publications.	Parks & Rec Information Technology Library Economic Development	Ongoing	Staff Time
2. Offer a wide variety of community enrichment services and programming. <i>For information on existing services and additional strategies and actions, see Chapter 5.</i>	Parks & Rec Library Human Services	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget
3. Expand housing and transportation options.	<i>See Goals 7.4 and 9.1 for specific strategies and actions.</i>		
4. Increase diversity of available consumer goods and services.	<i>See Goals 6.2 and 6.3 for specific strategies and actions.</i>		
5. Collaborate with UConn and ECSU to help elementary, middle and high school students develop their knowledge, skills and talents. Potential areas for partnership/collaboration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer enrichment programs • Entrepreneurship programs for high school students • Enhancements to STEM education in public schools • Related Arts <i>For additional education strategies involving the Region 19 Board of Education and the Mansfield Board of Education (MBOE), see Goal 5.2.</i>	Region 19 Board of Education Mansfield Board of Education	Medium Term	Staff Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy D | Promote Mansfield's assets and amenities.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Develop marketing materials showcasing Mansfield's amenities and services for use by local realtors and UConn to encourage new employees to live in Mansfield. As UConn continues to expand faculty and staff, efforts should be made to encourage new employees to live in Mansfield. A 'Welcome to Mansfield' package could include information on schools, community services and amenities, neighborhoods, housing options and regional assets such as nature-based recreation activities and proximity to cities such as Hartford, Providence, Boston and New York. Information and collaterals could also be made available on the Town website. As these materials could also be helpful in attracting faculty and students, the Town should seek funding support from UConn.	Economic Development Commission UConn Economic Development Team	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget UConn

Strategy E | Offer a welcoming environment to young professionals, entrepreneurs and innovators to attract and retain talent.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Enlist local and regional organizations to develop and implement a program of professional development and enrichment activities. Potential organizations include MetroHartford Alliance, Windham and Tolland Chambers of Commerce, UConn, Windham Arts, Innovation East, the Small Business Development Center, Mansfield Downtown Partnership and regional EDCs. Possible activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Organizing networking events</i> • <i>Developing venues and events for showcasing talent</i> • <i>Professional development opportunities</i> • <i>Promoting cultural, entertainment and recreational events</i> • <i>Recognizing accomplishments of residents through local publications and events</i> 	Economic Development Commission	Medium Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

CHAPTER 6: DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Goal 6.2

Mansfield has an entrepreneurial environment that supports business formation, expansion, and retention.**Measures of Effectiveness:**

- Increase in total number of businesses

Strategy A | Establish a business retention and expansion (BRE) program.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Develop a business visitation program using surveys or structured interviews to assess business status and identify outstanding or potential issues. Items for consideration/inclusion in the program include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying target businesses based on criteria such as size, location, growth potential, and possibility of the business relocating out of Mansfield due to existing concerns • Developing mechanisms to address issues identified in visits, either directly or through referral to other organizations, and follow-up to ensure that issues are resolved • Developing protocols for visits, tracking, and follow-up • Identifying key issues and business needs based on surveys/interviews • Identifying volunteers with business knowledge to conduct surveys and interviews • Providing training for staff and volunteers to ensure consistency and program effectiveness • Involving regional chambers of commerce in helping to recruit volunteers 	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
2. Include agricultural enterprises in BRE activities. The Agriculture Committee can assist in targeting farm businesses for BRE outreach.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
3. Prepare a Business Retention and Expansion plan with more specific strategies to foster entrepreneurship, small business development and talent retention.	Economic Development Commission	Medium Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy B | Connect businesses with information and resources.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Strengthen relationships with state and regional business organizations to expand knowledge of and access to business assistance resources. Examples include CT Small Business Development Center, Northeast CT Economic Alliance, MetroHartford Alliance, CT Department of Economic and Community Development, CT Department of Agriculture, UConn Cooperative Extension	Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time
2. Provide opportunities for businesses to connect with one-another.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget
3. Expand and periodically update the business and agriculture sections of the Town website. The pages should be clearly accessible from the homepage and include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community profile • Information on how to locate a business in Mansfield • Information on permitting process with links to key pages • Information on assistance programs • Information on available sites • Testimonials from existing businesses and farmers • Links to local, state and regional organizations, organized by type with a brief description of each • Primary point of contact 	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee Information Technology Economic Development Team	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time
4. Identify available commercial and agricultural properties for sale/lease and market through sites such as CERC's Site Finder website (www.ctsitefinder.com), www.farm-link.uconn.edu, and www.newenglandfarmlandfinder.org.	Economic Development Team	Short Term	Staff Time Operating Budget
5. Partner with area organizations and nearby communities to host informational events on topics of interest to local businesses. Coventry has an existing program in place; the Town should explore partnering on future programs of common interest to businesses in both communities.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
<div> <div>SHORT TERM = 2015–2019</div> <div>MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024</div> <div>LONG TERM = 2025–2035</div> </div>			

Strategy C | Reduce regulatory barriers to business growth. *For recommended changes to zoning regulations, see Goal 6.5.*

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Improve the permitting process by providing clear information, streamlining review and providing on-line service.	<i>See Goal 6.5 for specific recommendations.</i>		
2. Periodically evaluate and update permit fee structure to ensure that it is not a barrier to economic development. As part of any review, the Town should review fees in comparable communities to remain competitive.	Economic Development Team Town Council	Ongoing	Staff Time
3. Work with state and regional organizations and other communities to advocate for regulatory change at the state level to make Connecticut a more business-friendly state. Potential partners include the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Windham and Tolland Chambers of Commerce, Capitol Region Council of Governments, MetroHartford Alliance and CERC.	Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time

Strategy D | Promote local businesses and celebrate their success.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Work with area businesses to reinvigorate the Mansfield Business and Professionals Association (MBPA).	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team Windham Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
2. Update the Town's website to include business and agricultural portals that showcase local businesses, farms and products. Information can include business listings, highlights of local products and experiences, and recognition of local business success stories, such as chamber awards.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team Information Technology	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
3. Include articles and features in the Town newsletter spotlighting local businesses and agricultural/forestry enterprises.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
4. Develop local business and agriculture guides. A local business guide and map can help inform residents about the variety of goods and services available in the community.	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Short-Medium	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget Ad/Sponsors
5. Continue to encourage residents and businesses to buy local. Past efforts have focused on holiday shopping events. The program could be expanded to have a more year-round focus.	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Medium Term	Staff Time Operating Budget

Strategy E | Expand local business assistance programs.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Seek funding for capital improvement projects that will support local business growth consistent with Town objectives. Possible funding sources include the Connecticut Small Town Assistance Program and Small Cities grants.	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Ongoing	Staff Time Grants CIP
2. Consider developing local small business programs. Revolving loan and grant programs can help small businesses and farms finance improvements needed to help them succeed and grow. Funding for these types of programs may be available through state and federal grants, including the Department of Housing's Small Cities program.	Economic Development Commission Town Council Economic Development Team	Medium-Long	Staff Time Grants

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

CHAPTER 6: DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Goal 6.3

Mansfield has a growing and diversified economy that helps to maintain the high-quality services desired by residents.

Measures of Effectiveness:

- Increase in number of businesses in sectors identified as potential local and regional growth sectors
- Number of businesses related to UConn R&D or faculty expertise establishing operations in Mansfield
- Increases in, improvements to, or expanded access to tourism venues
- Number and square footage of new office, R&D, and light industry establishments
- Increase in assessed value of taxable commercial, industrial and agricultural properties
- Increase in number and diversity of job opportunities

Strategy A | Establish a regional business marketing program.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Collaborate with nearby towns on regional marketing efforts. Potential activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joint grant applications for economic development activities including marketing and shared staff</i> • <i>Development of regional marketing materials</i> • <i>Development of informal collaborative efforts such as cross-referrals of prospects that are not a good fit with the initial contact community.</i> 	Economic Development Commission Agriculture Committee UConn Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget Grants
2. Conduct outreach to commercial property developers that specialize in businesses aligned with the Town's marketing and development objectives. Lab space and multi-tenant space for early stage technology firms are potential targets for discussion.	Economic Development Team Economic Development Commission	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
3. Target businesses in economic sectors that are strong and growing regionally, technology businesses related to UConn, agricultural-related businesses and businesses providing underrepresented consumer goods and services. Initial efforts should focus on firms that are well-matched to current commercial property inventory; targeting can be broadened as more specialized facilities (e.g. with lab space) are developed. <i>See Strategy B for additional actions related to UConn-related businesses.</i>	Economic Development Commission UConn Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership Agriculture Committee	Medium Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
4. Strengthen relationship with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to encourage referrals of firms and site selection consultants seeking a location in Connecticut for businesses consistent with target economic sectors.	Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time
5. Pursue state and federal funding to support economic development activities and projects. Potential sources include Small Cities CDBG grants, US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant and loan programs.	Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget CIP (If match required)
6. Organize familiarization tours for businesses, site selectors, and commercial property developers to highlight available properties and the Town's assets and amenities. Tours could involve Town officials, real estate professionals, business leaders and university representatives, as appropriate.	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Short–Medium	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
7. Develop a menu of state and local incentives to support development of businesses and properties aligned with Town objectives. Potential incentives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing local Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) to finance public improvements associated with desired development projects, potentially in conjunction with a state TIF for large-scale projects through Connecticut Innovations</i> • <i>Fixing the assessment of privately developed and owned buildings for up to seven years</i> • <i>Offering funding to reduce the development costs of incubators or other multi-tenant facilities (potential funding sources include Small Cities and STEAP grants)</i> • <i>Supporting funding applications to Connecticut Innovations Bioscience Facility Fund</i> • <i>Working with developers to obtain brownfields remediation funding</i> • <i>Acquiring and land-banking property</i> 	Town Council Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Short–Medium	Staff Time Operating Budget Grants CIP

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
8. Work with the Town of Windham and the CT Department of Economic and Community Development to explore creation of an Airport Development Zone for the Windham airport. Airport development zones provide local property tax and state corporate tax incentives to businesses engaged in manufacturing, R&D related to manufacturing and other services related to the airport.	Economic Development Team Economic Development Commission Finance Town Council	Short–Medium	Staff Time Operating Budget

Strategy B | Collaborate with UConn to maximize the local economic benefits of the University's presence.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Increase efforts to capture businesses graduating from UConn's Technology Incubation Program (TIP) in Mansfield. These firms often need small scale R&D and office space with special fit-up for wet or dry lab space; however, demand has been insufficient for private developers or property owners to develop space involving the additional costs generated by fit-up requirements. Possible activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quantifying demand, both existing and previous, through documentation of TIP graduates that moved to other communities due to lack of space</i> • <i>Updating zoning regulations to expand areas where R&D businesses are allowed and streamlining review procedures (See Goal 6.5, Strategy C for specific recommendations)</i> • <i>Identifying potential funding sources and partners for a small-scale R&D start-up/incubator facility. The Axis901 project in Manchester (coworking space owned by the Town and developed through a partnership with Manchester Community College and First Niagara Bank) could be a potential model.</i> 	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget Grants
2. Work with UConn to explore the potential for public-private partnerships to redevelop under-utilized state-owned land such UConn's Depot Campus and the Bergin Correctional Facility for mixed public and private use. Possible actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Working with the Town and other stakeholders to explore reuse options.</i> • <i>Conducting site and feasibility studies, including potential for adaptive reuse of historic buildings</i> • <i>Exploring potential for brownfields assessment and remediation grants to address possible contamination</i> 	UConn Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Medium Term	Staff Time Operating Budget UConn Private funds

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy C | Promote Mansfield as a tourism destination.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Collaborate with nearby communities and The Last Green Valley to develop joint marketing efforts and promote more effective and targeted marketing of northeast Connecticut by Mystic Country and the Connecticut Office of Culture and Tourism.	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
2. Support UConn in developing additional summer adult and youth summer learning programs, using empty dormitory rooms for lodging.	Town Council	Ongoing	Staff Time
3. Supplement and enhance regional tourism development and marketing activities, with a particular emphasis on summer tourism. Expanding summertime activity to achieve a greater balance with other seasons will help provide a more stable market for businesses serving local consumers and visitors and increase year-round job opportunities.	Tourism-related businesses Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Short-Medium	Volunteer Time Staff Time Operating Budget
4. Develop a local tourism promotion organization. Other small communities with significant tourism assets have developed marketing efforts to supplement regional efforts. Activities could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Development of a visitor website and packages</i> • <i>Organization of special events</i> • <i>Development of theme trails</i> • <i>Installation of wayfinding signage</i> • <i>Operation of a visitor kiosk in Storrs Center</i> • <i>Promotion of additional tourism infrastructure (such as more lodging rooms)</i> 	Tourism-related businesses Economic Development Team Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Short–Medium	Staff Time Operating Budget Grants

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy D | Collaborate with surrounding communities to generate mutually desirable economic activity.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Work with surrounding communities to convene periodic joint meetings of Economic Development Commissions to discuss economic activity, challenges and opportunities and potential collaborations.	Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
2. Participate in efforts to update the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).	Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time
3. Explore potential for partnering with one or more nearby municipalities on a joint economic development project. Connecticut General Statutes allow for municipalities to partner on joint development projects, whereby municipalities can share in both the costs and revenues of a project. Regional projects can be more competitive in obtaining state and federal grants. Potential projects that may benefit from such an approach include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technology incubator/start-up space</i> • <i>Development of regional value-added processing, aggregation and distribution facilities (such as meat processing) that would support local agricultural enterprises</i> See Goal 6.3, Strategy B, Action 1 and Goal 6.4, Strategy F for more information on these projects/needs.	Economic Development Commission Town Council Economic Development Team Agriculture Committee	Medium-Long	Staff Time Operating Budget CIP Grants

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

CHAPTER 6: DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Goal 6.4

Agriculture is valued by the community and expanding with increased acreage, higher production and growing market opportunities.

In addition to being an economic development asset, agricultural lands and open spaces also provide ecosystem and revenue benefits to the Town. *See Goal 10.3, Strategy B, Action 4 for specific recommendations on how the Town can continue to preserve and enhance open space and agricultural lands.*

Measures of Effectiveness:

- Increase in agricultural acreage, managed forests, production and distribution
- Increase in average farm income
- Increase in number of full-time farmers
- Number of Mansfield farms supplying products to local schools, businesses and institutions

Strategy A | Increase visibility of agriculture to strengthen the agricultural identity of the town and region. *See Goal 5.4 for additional strategies related to increasing access to local food.*

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Promote food production by non-farming residents and private, non-commercial agricultural activities. Connect residents with programs and resources for growing their own food at home or in community gardens. <i>See Goal 5.4, Strategy A, Action 1 and Goal 5.6, Strategy A, Action 3 for specific actions on increasing the availability of community gardens.</i>	Agriculture Committee Parks & Rec	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
2. Feature local products at community events.	All Departments	Ongoing	Staff Time Operating Budget
3. Preserve scenic vistas of working agriculture. <i>See related action under Goal 3.4, Strategy A.</i>	PZC Agriculture Committee Town Council	Ongoing	Staff Time
4. Develop a program to recognize local farmers who are making a contribution to agriculture and forestry.	Agriculture Committee	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
5. Identify Mansfield as an agricultural community through signs. Post signs at town gateways showing support for agriculture; develop signage to identify preserved agricultural lands; increase the visibility of agricultural producers through directional signs, both permanent and temporary/seasonal.	Agriculture Committee DPW	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget
6. Encourage schools to promote agriculture. Highlight local foods on school menus; incorporate nutritional and agriculture-based curriculum, and provide students with experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, taste tests and composting.	Agriculture Committee Mansfield Board of Education Region 19 Board of Education UConn	Short–Medium	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

Strategy B | Promote agricultural experiences for the public.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Encourage UConn to strengthen connections with local farms through events, trips to farms and other agri-tourism sites, purchasing food from local farms, etc.	Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Staff Time
2. Support and encourage agricultural education and activities for youth, including 4-H program and Region 19's Agri-Science Program. Potential activities include a recognition program for youth achievements in agriculture.	Agriculture Committee Mansfield Board of Education Region 19	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
3. Organize events on farms, forest lands and at the Storrs Farmers Market.	Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Operating Budget
4. Work with other communities, regional organizations and the state to develop and brand an 'Agricultural Trail' to showcase local agri-tourism activities. Leverage the success of UConn's Dairy Bar to encourage visits to local farms and help connect interested farmers to other local and regional agri-tourism destinations, activities and initiatives. <i>See Goal 6.5, Strategy B, Action 2 for strategies to reduce regulatory barriers to agri-tourism in Mansfield.</i>	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Short-Medium	Staff Time Volunteer Time Operating Budget

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy C | Continue to connect farmers with resources. *See Goal 6.2 for related strategies and actions.*

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Connect farmers with state programs and resources at the CT Department of Agriculture such as Farm-to-School, Farm-to-Chef, and Farm Viability Grants.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
2. Conduct outreach to farmers to ensure that they are aware of available local tax incentives. Examples include PA 490, abatements and exemptions unique to agricultural activities, and other business tax incentives such as those identified in <i>Goal 6.3, Strategy A, Action 7</i> as may be adopted by the Town Council.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
3. Include a representative from the UConn School of Agriculture and Natural Resources as a member of the Agriculture Committee.	Town Council UConn	Short Term	Volunteer Time
4. Support the development of a local farmers network to enhance opportunities for collaborating and sharing information.	Agriculture Committee Nearby Towns	Short Term	Volunteer Time
5. Partner with UConn to make information about upcoming speakers, events and research related to agriculture more easily accessible to farmers and the public.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Short Term	Staff Time Volunteer Time
6. Work with nearby communities to develop an annual or semi-annual event that brings together regional farmers and people from relevant support organizations. Potential topics include education on marketing channel selection and exploring the potential for a regional cooperative to facilitate sales to institutions, restaurants and grocery stores.	Agriculture Committee	Short–Medium	Volunteer Time Operating Budget Sponsors

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy D | Ensure that Town officials and the public understand the value of agriculture and forestry to Mansfield.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
<p>1. Identify the full range of benefits related to agriculture and forestry and communicate to officials and the community.</p> <p>This will help communicate why agriculture is important to people with different priorities, such as contributions to sustainability, community character, economic development and climate change mitigation.</p>	<p>Agriculture Committee</p> <p>Open Space Preservation Committee</p> <p>Conservation Commission</p> <p>Economic Development Team</p>	Ongoing	<p>Staff Time</p> <p>Volunteer Time</p>
<p>2. Provide ongoing education to Town employees and commission/committee members on the importance of agriculture in the community, contributions to the community, and why it is the Town's policy to support agriculture.</p> <p>Identify potential impacts for each department, board and commission on agricultural viability and educate staff accordingly.</p>	<p>Agriculture Committee</p> <p>Economic Development Team</p>	Ongoing	<p>Staff Time</p> <p>Volunteer Time</p>
<p>3. Recruit farmers to serve on all relevant Town committees, commissions and boards to ensure that challenges and opportunities related to agriculture can be brought to the table.</p> <p>In addition to the Agriculture Committee, important groups include the Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Open Space Preservation Committee, Sustainability Committee and Town/University Relations Committee.</p>	<p>Town Council</p> <p>Town Democratic and Republican Town Committees</p> <p>Agriculture Committee</p>	Ongoing	<p>Staff Time</p> <p>Volunteer Time</p>
<p>4. Ask Town boards and committees to identify any actions related to agriculture within annual reports.</p>	Town Manager	Ongoing	<p>Staff Time</p> <p>Volunteer Time</p>

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy E | Support legislation, policies and regulations that increase farm viability.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Advocate for changes to state legislation and policies to support farming and expanding markets. Potential issues include enabling legislation for agricultural tax incentives, health regulations related to production and processing of food, and coordinating regulations between states, such as weight of trucks.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Commission Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
2. Conduct annual outreach with farmers to review existing regulations and identify impacts on the viability of their operations.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time

Strategy F | Support the expansion of agricultural operations and agriculture-related businesses. *See Goal 3.2 for strategies and actions related to increasing available agricultural land.*

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Incubate and retain new farm operations. <i>See related business strategies under Goal 6.2, Strategy A and Goal 6.2, Strategy B.</i>	Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
2. Encourage UConn to include representatives from the Town to ensure that new agricultural initiatives meet the needs of local and regional farmers.	Economic Development Team Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Staff Time
3. Support food processing and agricultural product distribution initiatives. The Last Green Valley calls for a regional food hub to process and distribute food, such as Willimantic's Commercially Licensed Cooperative Kitchen (CLiCK). Additional regional initiatives include a mobile slaughtering unit and multi-processing centers for meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Commission	Ongoing	Staff Time Volunteer Time
4. Consider establishing a small grant program to assist farmers in growing their business. Examples of potential projects include but are not limited to creation of a CSA, signs, marketing materials, and organic certification.	Town Council Agriculture Committee	Short-Medium	Operating Budget CIP Grants

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

Strategy G | Support new market channels for local agricultural products.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Increase the volume of local foods in public and private institutions (i.e. school food service, child care and pre-k programs, hospitals, correctional facilities, etc.). <i>See related action under Goal 6.4, Strategy C.</i>	Agriculture Committee Mansfield Board of Education Region 19 Board of Education	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Operating Budget
2. Work with UConn Dining Services to continue their programs to purchase local food. UConn has demonstrated commitment to procuring local foods whenever possible and is active in efforts to change procurement guidelines for State institutions to make it easier to buy local food. There are tentative plans to move UConn's production kitchens to a new facility at the Bergin campus which would allow more processing (cut, cook, chill, freeze) and make it easier for Dining Services to contract directly with local farmers.	Agriculture Committee	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Staff Time
3. Help make connections between farmers and new restaurants, stores and the distributors that supply them. The public school system already participates in the Connecticut Farm to School program by receiving fruits, corn, pumpkins and squash from an orchard in Killingly. The Farm to School program is actively recruiting farms. Restaurants can connect with local farmers by participating in a similar state Farm to Chef program.	Agriculture Committee Economic Development Team	Ongoing	Volunteer Time Staff Time
4. Incorporate SNAP EBT payment programs at the Storrs Farmers Market.	<i>See Goal 5.4, Strategy A, Action 3 for specific recommendations.</i>		

Strategy H | Support marketing of agricultural products and agriculture-related businesses.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Identify projects for marketing local agriculture and apply for funds from the Connecticut Farm Viability Program. Potential projects include a 'Grown in Mansfield' brand and signage programs as identified in <i>Goal 6.4, Strategy A, Action 5.</i>	Agriculture Committee	Short Term	Staff Time Operating Budget Grants
2. Promote local farms and products on the Town website and at community events.	<i>See related strategies under Goal 6.2, Strategy D and Goal 6.4, Strategy A.</i>		

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

CHAPTER 6: DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Goal 6.5
Mansfield’s land use regulations are farm-friendly and support business retention and expansion efforts while protecting community character.

- Measures of Effectiveness:
- Increase in non-residential grand list
 - Increase in number of new businesses
 - Increase in agricultural production and distribution
 - Increase in number and square footage of new office, R&D and light industry businesses on redeveloped sites

Strategy A | Reduce barriers to business growth in Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
<p>1. Revise subdivision process and requirements to distinguish between single-family subdivisions and non-residential/multi-family residential subdivisions.</p> <p>As the subdivision process is the sole opportunity to review single-family subdivisions, the standards and requirements are extensive. However, many of these requirements are duplicative or not applicable to multi-family residential and non-residential projects as these are either located in developed areas, are subject to another review process such as site plan review or special permit, or have detailed design and performance standards identified in the Zoning Regulations.</p>	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Planning Grant
<p>2. Reduce the number of business uses needing special permit approval by including more robust development standards for specific uses to ensure quality development.</p> <p>Development review processes can also be a tool to direct businesses and uses to the four business target areas identified in <i>Goal 6.1, Strategy B</i>. Items to be considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Locations—approvals through site plan and/or zoning permit review may be more appropriate in major commercial areas than smaller neighborhood/village business areas which have residential neighborhoods in close proximity</i>• <i>Areas/situations where certain uses may not be appropriate in all locations, necessitating special permit review</i>• <i>Thresholds for requiring PZC site plan approval</i>• <i>Thresholds for administrative review and approval through zoning permit process</i>• <i>Specific standards and requirements for uses, site and building development</i>	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant
SHORT TERM = 2015–2019			
MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024			
LONG TERM = 2025–2035			

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
3. Refine existing provisions regarding non-conforming uses. Regulations for non-conforming uses, particularly commercial and higher density residential uses, should allow for continuation and potential limited expansions. Significant intensification inconsistent with the goals of this plan should be discouraged.	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant
4. Update sign regulations to improve usability and allow for adequate business marketing while minimizing sign clutter and maintaining high aesthetic standards.	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant

Strategy B | Support growth of agriculture and agri-tourism through changes to regulations.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to remove barriers to farm viability. Issues to be reviewed/addressed include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keeping of livestock</i> • <i>Compatible farm businesses</i> • <i>Signage</i> • <i>Parking</i> • <i>Farm worker housing</i> • <i>Hoop houses or other growing structures</i> • <i>Horticulture</i> • <i>Farm-energy opportunities</i> • <i>Agricultural activities on small residential lots</i> • <i>Buffers as part of new residential developments locating next to existing farms</i> Potential resources for model regulations include: Eastern RC&D's Guidance and Recommendations for Connecticut Municipal Zoning Regulations and Ordinances for Livestock (2012) and RIDEM's Community Guidance for Maintaining Working Farms and Forests (2012).	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant
2. Review and revise Zoning Regulations to reduce barriers to agri-tourism activities. Agri-tourism can include pick-your-own programs, mazes and hayrides, farm-to-table events, weddings, fishing events, and other types of agriculture and natural resource tourism. Issues to be reviewed/addressed include design standards, signage, parking and review procedures.	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
3. Update Zoning Regulations to enable development of infrastructure that would support agriculture-related businesses, such as inputs, food waste, aggregation, processing, distribution, etc. Some of these activities may be water/wastewater intensive, requiring a location with access to public water and sewers.	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant

Strategy C | Support expansion of Research and Development (R&D) and light industrial uses in appropriate locations. See Map 8.3: Future Land Use for locations of proposed Mixed Use Centers and Commercial areas.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Update zoning regulations for areas designated as Mixed Use Centers and Commercial in the Future Land Use Plan to allow R&D uses. There are many different types of R&D uses, some of which require dry lab space (such as computers, electronics, robotics labs), wet lab space (where chemicals, drugs, other materials are handled), and biolabs (labs dealing with biological materials). Regulations should be updated to identify development standards and review procedures specific to R&D uses. Appropriate areas for consideration include Four Corners, Storrs Center, Route 6/Route 195/Pleasant Valley area in southern Mansfield and Perkins Corner. Issues to consider include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas/situations where certain uses may not be appropriate in all locations, necessitating special permit review • Thresholds for requiring PZC site plan approval • Thresholds for administrative review and approval through zoning permit process • Specific standards and requirements for uses, site and building development (See Goal 6.5, Strategy C, Action 4). • Environmental performance standards • Transportation connections • Wastewater disposal 	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
<p>2. Limit R&D businesses with biological laboratories to labs that meet the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) criteria for Biosafety Levels 1 and 2 until additional research is done to determine whether there are any areas where a Biosafety Level 3 lab could be located with appropriate safeguards and review procedures. Biosafety Level 4 labs should not be allowed.</p> <p>R&D businesses with biolabs should only be allowed with special permit approval; review criteria should include requirements for monitoring procedures to ensure conformance with federal safety standards.</p>	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant
<p>3. Update zoning regulations for areas designated as Mixed Use Center and Commercial to allow light industrial uses.</p> <p>Light industrial uses include uses such as warehouses, wholesale facilities, and limited assembly production activities. Regulations should identify appropriate locations where such uses could be allowed. Areas and items to be considered include those identified above under <i>Goal 6.5, Strategy C, Action 1</i> as well as appropriate size/scale. Some areas may need size limitations to ensure compatibility with surrounding development.</p>	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant
<p>4. Develop design standards and guidelines for R&D and light industrial uses, as well as appropriate industrial performance standards.</p> <p>Performance standards for industry involve measurable limits on noise, lighting, emissions and similar issues. Modern R&D and light industrial uses often have no external impacts. Design standards and guidelines will ensure compatibility with surrounding areas in terms of heights, massing, landscaping, character visible from the road, location of parking and similar issues.</p>	PZC	Short Term	Staff Time Community Challenge Grant

SHORT TERM = 2015–2019

MEDIUM TERM = 2020–2024

LONG TERM = 2025–2035

[This page intentionally left blank.]

